

The Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes

Council Report

Report Number ED2017-006

Date: March 21, 2017

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Place: Council Chambers

Ward Community Identifier: 2,6,9,10,11,12,14,15

Subject: Rural Economic Development Fund Application Request for
Downtown Revitalization Implementation

Author/Title: Rebecca Mustard
Manager, Economic Development

Signature:



Recommendation(s):

RESOLVED THAT Report ED2017-006, Rural Economic Development Fund Application Request for Downtown Revitalization Implementation, be received;

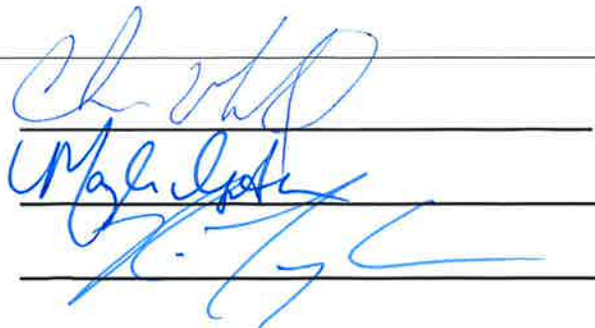
THAT the project "Downtown Revitalization Implementation" be approved for an application to the Rural Economic Development Program with a total project cost of up to \$200,000 with the City's 50% contribution coming from the Economic Development Reserve.

THAT the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute any documents and agreements required by the approval of this application.

Department Head:

Corporate Services Director / Other:

Chief Administrative Officer:



Background:

At the Council Meeting of March 7, 2017, Council adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED THAT Report ED2017-005, Downtown Revitalization Update and Action Plans, be received;

THAT the Downtown Revitalization Action Plans for Coboconk-Norland, Fenelon Falls, Lindsay and Omemee, as outlined in Appendices A to D respectively to Report ED2017-005, be approved;

THAT financial considerations for projects beyond those already identified in existing budgets and work plans be incorporated in future budgets for consideration;

THAT a Downtown Revitalization Committee of Council be established with representation including each community that has a completed Downtown Revitalization Plan; and

THAT staff develop the Terms of Reference for the Downtown Revitalization Committee and forward to Council for approval.

This report addresses the direction to begin implementation of the four Action Plans.

Rationale:

On January 30, 2017, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs announced the release of a new round of funding for the Rural Economic Development Program. The Rural Economic Development Program is a cost-sharing program to help rural communities remove barriers to community economic development. This program was used to fund the four point Downtown Revitalization Program in Coboconk-Norland, Fenelon Falls, Lindsay and Omemee that resulted in the development of the four Action Plans.

The scope of projects eligible for funding through the Rural Economic Development Program are limited to planning or implementation applications, the latter is the appropriate category for implementing the Downtown Revitalization Action Plans. Implementation projects must meet one or more of the following priority areas;

- Sector development and economic diversification
- Marketing, promotional or branding activities
- Workforce attraction, retention and development

Ineligible projects for funding under the Rural Economic Development Program include infrastructure, capital projects, and projects designed to improve community aesthetics and functionality. This excludes many of the activities

identified in the Downtown Revitalization Action Plans from being eligible for funding through this program including the implementation of identified physical improvements, beautification, transportation and parking projects.

Implementing Downtown Revitalization Action Plans with Rural Economic Development Funding

The four Downtown Revitalization Action Plans identify activities unique to each community for the improvement of their downtowns, with common threads that create similarities across the plans. These common threads provide opportunities to work collaboratively across communities, sharing resources. Several common thread activities found in all four Action Plans are eligible for Rural Economic Development Program funding. These eligible items include; business attraction, business training and development, communications, and marketing.

Successful application to the Rural Economic Development Fund must meet certain criteria in addition to being eligible and falling into priority area. Applications must demonstrate how the project addresses challenges to rural Ontario, contribute to long term economic development outcomes, be innovative, and be a priority based on a pre-completed planning process.

Project: Business attraction competition

The proposed application project is a business attraction competition to foster and grow new businesses in the four downtowns. The need for new businesses in downtown commercial spaces was identified in the Action Plans of all four communities and may include business attraction, start up, and home based business growth. A competition creates energy, excitement and engages residents, business owners, and visitors. The competition will take place between 2017 and December 2018 and include four major components:

1. Marketing
2. Training
3. Collaboration
4. Coordination

1. Marketing

This component will include the development of marketing materials, and promotion of the program to local residents, visitors, and business owners. All four action plans identified community marketing as important to improving the health of the downtowns and creating vibrant spaces. Marketing for the business attraction competition will be focused on a creating and implementing a comprehensive marketing plan to promote the program far and wide to both attract interested participants and excite the communities about new opportunities. Marketing will include online and print opportunities as well as other creative outlets for promotion.

The application will also include a small funding request to contribute to the marketing efforts of each community based on their Action Plans. This funding will assist communities in supporting the retention and expansion of existing businesses. It will also help create customer demand to support the addition of new businesses.

2. Training

Business training was identified as an activity in all four community Action Plans. For the purpose of the business attraction competition, training is necessary to identify market ready businesses and elevate entrepreneurs to the next level. Training provided as part of competition will also be open to existing business throughout Kawartha Lakes. Training will be completed through the Kawartha Lakes Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre.

3. Collaboration

The Action Plans identify the importance of collaboration between the community and the City. This project provides opportunity for the City to leverage Provincial funding and support a number of initiatives identified as the responsibility of the municipality, community, and collaborative.

Community Partners identified in the action plan have been informally consulted in the preparation of this business plan competition proposal. Over the next few weeks, Economic Development staff will continue to work collaboratively with local organizations to develop the application. These organizations will help deliver a successful competition. Their participation will be requested to assist with; marketing and communications, local logistics, mentoring participants, helping find available real estate and judging winners.

The competition prize package will be put together by Economic Development staff in partnership with local organizations.

4. Coordination

Council Report ED2017-005 highlighted the importance of the City maintaining a leadership role in championing implementation of the four Downtown Revitalization Action Plans. This project will be coordinated through the Economic Development Division and leverage the benefits of being a City and sharing resources across communities.

The application will include a request for a contract Project Coordinator. This is an ambitious competition spanning a large geography and staff resources are required to effectively implement.

Participants in the Downtown Revitalization projects worked hard and contributed a significant amount of time to their community projects. Leading implementation at this time in order to produce immediate tangible results will be important for the ongoing improvement of these downtown areas and continued community engagement.

Other Alternatives Considered:

Council could choose not to support the recommendation.

Council could also request that additional communities that have not completed the Downtown Revitalization program be included in the application and benefit from the program. Staff is recommending that this be considered a pilot program and participation be limited to the four communities that completed the Downtown Revitalization program. These communities have completed the background work to be ready to undertake this initiative and implement as soon as funding is available. In addition, as a new initiative, testing the program in a small number of communities allows for the program to be evaluated and, if successful, improved and shared with more communities.

Financial Considerations:

Funding through the Rural Economic Development Program is 50% of eligible project costs. Staff is requesting Council approve up to \$100,000 from Economic Development Reserves for this program. The contribution amount will be finalized prior to the application due date of March 31, 2017 based on project costs.

Relationship of Recommendation(s) To the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan:

The City's Strategic Plan outlines Council's vision of the municipality. The vision consists of three of the following main Strategic Goals:

- Goal 1 – A Vibrant and Growing Economy
- Goal 2 – An Exceptional Quality of Life
- Goal 3 – A Healthy Environment

This report aligns with a Vibrant and Growing Economy Priority in that it promotes economic opportunities and business expansion and an Exceptional Quality of Life Priority by creating places that communities are proud of.

Review of Accessibility Implications of Any Development or Policy:

Incorporating accessibility and the work of the Age Friendly project will be incorporated into the project, if successful.

Servicing Comments:

Not applicable

Consultations:

Judy Coward, OMAFRA
Chris Marshall, Director of Development Services
Ron Taylor, CAO
Economic Development staff has met informally with stakeholders in the Downtown Revitalization project

Attachments:

N/A

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Department Head: Chris Marshall, Director

Department File: